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A NARRATIVE, OF THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JOHN ELLIOT, M.D.

WITH AN

APOLOGY,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

[PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.]

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A

NARRATIVE

OF

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF

JOHN ELLIOT, M. D.

CONTAINING

AN ACCOUNT OF THE RISE, PROGRESS, AND CATASTROPHE OF HIS UNHAPPY PASSION FOR

MISS MARY BOYDELL;

A REVIEW OF HIS WRITINGS.

TOGETHER WITH AN

APOLOGY,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF,

Under the Preſſure of expected Condemnation, after his Commitment for attempting to aſſaſſinate Miſs BOYDELL.

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NARRATIVE

OF THE

LIFE AND DEATH OF DR. ELLIOT;

WITH A

REVIEW OF HIS WRITINGS.

DR. John Elliot was deſcended of very reſpectable parents, in the county of Somerſet. Early in life, he gave the moſt uncommon indications of genius. He compoſed at twelve years of age, a tragedy and ſeveral other pieces of poetry, which, however, he ſoon after deſtroyed, feeling within himſelf a more powerful propenſity to the ſtudies of natural hiſtory and mathematics. A great genius, conſcious of powers adequate to the firſt part in his own line, ſcorns to figure as a ſecondary character in a province not his own.

In conſequence of his predilection for the medical profeſſion, he was put apprentice to an Apothecary in London. Here he proſecuted, with uncommon ardour and ſucceſs, the ſeveral branches of the medical and chirurgical arts. As ſoon as the time of his apprenticeſhip was expired, he ſet up for himſelf. He ſoon after took out his degree of Doctor of Medicine, and in all probability would have riſen long ago, to the firſt reputation among his brethren of the faculty, had it not been for an unhappy paſſion, which blaſted the vigour of his mind, deluded his life in fruitleſs hopes, and, broken-hearted, at laſt conveyed him to the grave.

Before the time of his apprenticeſhip was expired, he had the misfortune to become acquainted with a Miſs Mary Boydell. This lady ſeems to be one of thoſe, poſſeſſed of that ſelfiſh and cold but coquetiſh diſpoſition which delights to torture in others, feelings whoſe ſenſibility they are deſtined never to know.

She met the modeſt advances of Mr. Elliot with that inviting facility, which could not fail to faſcinate the mind of a young man, whoſe heart was quite new, and who looked up to the

the fair ſex with that profound reſpect, which animated our anceſtors in the days of knight errantry. The freedoms which ſhe permitted him, were ſo many chains of adamant, that bound by the ties of gratitude the ſenſibility of a timid lover, whoſe growing paſſion the ſlighteſt rebuff would have blaſted in the bud. He doated upon his Delia, as he called her, with inexpreſſible fondneſs. She loved him perhaps as much as the prudential coldneſs of her conſtitution would permit. But her intereſted views, and avaricious expectations, would not ſuffer her to give her hand to a man, whoſe perſonal merits would have done honour to the choice of any woman whatever, and whoſe income was adequate to the genteel ſupport of any moderate woman.

Mr. Elliot prudently reſolved to ſubdue a fruitleſs paſſion: He had forbore viſiting her for ſome time, when one day peruſing the newſpaper, he read the marriage of a Miſs Boydell of Cheapſide. He fell ſenſeleſs on the floor. He recovered from this fit to a paroxiſm of deſpair. He felt that he could not exiſt without her. He attempted to deſtroy himſelf by poiſon; but the ſtrength of his conſtitution proved ſuperior to the doſe.

As ſoon as he had got the better of the languiſhing illneſs into which this deſperate attempt had thrown him, he abandoned his buſineſs, and left London.

He wandered a forlorn wretch over the kingdom for the ſpace of twelve years. At length his faculties were in a manner worn out, and an abſolute apathy ſucceeded to a ſtate of excruciating ſenſibility. He returned to London, and again ſet up in buſineſs.

Scarcely had he arrived, when this woman, this enemy to his repoſe, renewed the unhappy attachment in the manner that he relates in the ſubſequent Apology, in which he ſeems to deſcribe, with much accuracy, the progreſs of his paſſion and the conflict of his feelings.

" And now," ſays he, " my unhappy flame burſt forth from " its aſhes with as much force as if it had never been extin- " guiſhed. She met, or ſeemed at leaſt to meet my renovated " paſſion with correſponding emotions. We exchanged a thou- " ſand tender proteſtations of unalterable love."

Miſs

Miſs Boydell, however, was much too obedient a niece to contradict the wiſhes of her uncle, who deſired her, ſome time ago, to receive the addreſſes of a Mr. Nicols, an opulent Bookſeller, eſpecially as the Alderman's choice correſponded ſo well with her own intereſted diſpoſition. She ſtill continued, however, to play a double game with Elliot, pretending that her uncle forced her inclinations; while, on the other hand, ſhe aſſured the Alderman that Dr. Elliot was a perſon with whom ſhe had never carried on a correſpondence, and with whom indeed ſhe was hardly acquainted.

Meanwhile, the unfortunate Dr. Elliot, after many fruitleſs attempts to excite her compaſſion, after many internal conflicts, determined at laſt, as he expreſſes himſelf in his Apology, " to " extinguiſh in night eternal a miſerable exiſtence."

But he determined at the ſame time to rouſe her to a ſenſe of her perfidious duplicity, which was too palpable to eſcape even a man of his ſimplicity of manners.

For this double purpoſe, he bound together with ſtrong packthread, a brace of piſtols, which he charged with powder only.

Another

Another brace he bound together, in the ſame manner, and charged with ball. "With the firſt," ſays he, "I deſigned to wake "her, as it were, to a ſenſe of her perfidious conduct; while with "the other I determined to blow out my brains, and fall breathleſs "at her feet."

He watched a whole month, in vain, for an opportunity to put his purpoſe in execution. At length, on the 9th of July laſt he overtook her, walking in Princes-ſtreet, with Mr. Nicols.—— He fired at her back the piſtol charged with powder; but he was ſeized too ſuddenly to be able to put the reſt of his ſcheme in execution.

The brace of piſtols, charged with ball, were found in his pocket, together with an epitaph written on himſelf.

He was committed to Newgate, to ſtand his trial for attempting to aſſaſſinate Miſs Boydell.

On the 16th of July he was tried, and acquitted by the Jury, who were fully convinced that the piſtols with which he fired at Miſs

Boydell

Boydell were charged with powder only. But he was remanded back to priſon to take his trial for an aſſault; and on Sunday the 22d of July he died in Newgate, of a broken heart.

Such was the lamentable life, ſuch the miſerable end of Dr. Elliot. A man to whom nature had been prodigal in her gifts, on whom ſhe had beſtowed a deep capability of bliſs, only to render him the moſt unhappy of the human race.

The unſuſpicious ſincerity of his ſoul led him eaſily into the ſnare of a ſubtle and unfeeling woman. His extreme ſenſibility, inſtead of being the medium of refined enjoyments, was the ſource of the moſt exquiſite torture. And the vigour of his mind, which ſhould have been the inſtrument of multifarious gratification, was waſted in the vain purſuit of an unworthy object, which could not have made him happy, ſince nature had not given her a heart to beſtow.

To his laſt breath, however, he doated upon this woman. He delighted to make her the ſubject of converſation. Sometimes indeed he broke out into exclamations againſt her perfidy;

but in general he racked his invention to form excuſes for her conduct. He was certain, he ſaid, that ſhe loved him, and he attributed to the tyrannical character of her uncle the whole blame of her procedure. After his death, an hundred ſcraps of paper were found in his 'ſcrutore, on all of which he had ſcribbled in proſe or verſe ſomething in praiſe of his Delia, the poetic name by which he addreſſed the object of his affections.

Dr. Elliot died in the 42d year of his age. He was a robuſt man, almoſt ſix feet high, extremely well made, of a gentleman-like preſence. His features were ſtrongly marked. His forehead was large and prominent; his noſe rather long, and a little elevated in the middle; his mouth ſmall and well formed; his lips fleſhy; his neck ſtrong and erect; his cheſt ample and manly; his hair, coarſe and jet black, hung thin upon his forehead. His complexion was dark, but ruddy and animated: his eyes, large and black, were capable of much fire. The general expreſſion of his face beſpoke a man of reflection and ſenſibility.

Few men ever poſſeſſed the eſteem and affection of his acquaintance in a degree equal to Dr. Elliot. His manners were ſimple,

ſimple, candid and ſincere. His converſation was plain, frank, and unaſſuming. His heart was warm and philanthropic. While he was in buſineſs, a large portion of his time was employed in adminiſtering advice and medicine gratis to the poor. He roſe frequently from table in the midſt of his meal, and often left his couch at midnight, to adminiſter relief to an indigent patient. To do good in fact was the luxury of his ſoul, and the only enjoyment indeed of which the cruelty of his lot could not deprive him. When he unbended himſelf over a bottle with his friend, his converſation was highly jovial and facetious; he told a good ſtory, and ſung occaſionally a good ſong.

He delighted in the converſation of honeſt people, in the low conditions of life, among whom the ſocial intercourſe is leſs confined by forms of etiquette. The unaffected ſimplicity of his manners qualified him for their ſociety. Mrs. Rutledge, the perſon at whoſe houſe he lodged the two laſt years of his life, always took him for a poor harmleſs man, a little out of his mind. She uſed frequently to thruſt her child into the Doctor's hands, who dandled the baby, for hours together, with all the whimſical fondneſs of an old nurſe.

With

With regard to Mr. Boydell's gardener, with whom he formerly lived, he could no more be unacquainted with Dr. Elliot's name and character, than Miſs Boydell, whatever that lady may pretend, could be ignorant that the Doctor was at Hampſtead. Whatever name he might publicly aſſume, the rent receipts which he received from the gardener are in the name of Elliot.

The recluſe and obſcure manner in which the Doctor lived for theſe four years paſt has given occaſion to his enemies, and even to many of his friends, to tax him with avarice; a vice, however, to which he was far from being addicted.

A ſoul ſuſceptible of ſo baſe a paſſion was incapable of ſentiments ſo tender and ardent as thoſe which animated his breaſt. Nor had he been a man of an avaricious diſpoſition, would he have relinquiſhed, with a very moderate fortune, a lucrative buſineſs, as well as a certain proſpect of arriving, had he choſe to have exerted himſelf, to the firſt degree of eſtimation in the medical profeſſion.

The

The fact is, he left his buſineſs to abandon himſelf totally to the fatal luxury of an unhappy paſſion. For this purpoſe he withdrew entirely from the converſation of his friends and relations. He hired, in an obſcure part of the town, a garret, where the few moments that he did not paſs in brooding over an ill-omened affection, were ſpent in the moſt profound ſpeculations of an abſtruce philoſophy. A mind abſorbed in the deepeſt of all paſſions, and engaged in the purſuits of ſcience, has little taſte for, or time to attend to thoſe minute elegancies of life, which form the enjoyment of the frivolous and unimpaſſioned part of the human ſpecies. Perhaps he might have carried too far his contempt for the little decencies of civilized ſociety. But that this did not proceed from a principle of avarice, many who have experienced his generoſity, many who have been the objects of his charitable diſpoſition are ready and forward to atteſt.

As a philoſopher, he acquired the eſteem and reſpect of the moſt celebrated writers of the age, among which number were Doctor Franklin and Doctor Prieſtley, as well as the Academies at home and abroad, with moſt of whom he correſponded.

He has left behind him ſeveral monuments of his talents, induſtry, and genius; of which the following are the moſt conſiderable:

The Medical Almanack.

Elements of the Branches of Natural Philoſophy connected with Medicine, viz. *Chemiſtry, Optics, Sound, Hydroſtics, Electricity, and Phyſiology, including the Doctrine of the Atmoſphere, Fire, Phlogiſton, Water*, &c. *together with Bergman's Tables of Elective Attraction, with Explanations and Improvements.*

Experiments and Obſervations on Light and Colours; to which is prefixed the Analogy between Heat and Motion.

This laſt work abounds ſo much with curious and original matter, and diſplays, in ſo ſtrong a light, the bold, deep, and untramelled genius of the Author, that we believe a ſhort review of it cannot but be acceptable to the reader.

He begins, by eſtabliſhing in a very clear and ingenious manner the analogy between heat and motion.

He

He proceeds to conſider the light and colours of heated bodies.

He advances the propoſition, *that the colour of a ſhining body is connected with its ſenſible heat, and advances from red towards violet, as the heat is increaſed.* This he proves by a variety of experiments; from which he deduces the following new and very curious remark:

" If the ſun and fixed ſtars be ſuppoſed to ſhine from being heated white hot, like this body, they muſt, by degrees, grow colder; and therefore muſt originally have been much hotter than they are now. The denſeſt colour in the ſun's light is at preſent the orange yellow. But formerly it muſt have been ſome colour nearer to violet: and as the ſun becomes colder, it will be ſome colour nearer to the deepeſt red; after which it muſt ceaſe to ſhine. If therefore many centuries hence, the denſeſt colour be found to verge more towards red, aſtronomers will be furniſhed with the *data* for calculating how long it will be before the ſun will ceaſe to ſhine; and alſo what its colours will be at any diſtant intermediate period; as well as what it was at any period

preceding

preceding. And if we ſuppoſe the ſun's light to have been originally the middle white, or that the denſeſt colour was the center of the green,* it might even be calculated how long ago the ſun began to ſhine. As the light of ſome of the fixed ſtars is redder than that of others, it would follow that they either began to ſhine ſooner, or that they have leſs matter, or elſe that they were not at firſt equally heated with the others.

" If, however, theſe great bodies be ſuppoſed to be in a fuſed ſtate, and to congeal before they ceaſe to be luminous, their temperature, and of courſe the denſeſt colour, will, during that time, be found to remain ſtationary; and the calculation muſt be according."

He next gives ſome very curious experiments on the cooling power of light.

In his eſſay on the blue colour of the ſky are the following very ingenious and original ideas and obſervations.

" It

* One of the largeſt of the fixed ſtars even now ſeems to have a tinctue of greeniſh blue.

" It ſeems to me that " the blue colour of the ſky originates " chiefly from the light reflected by the earth; and to ariſe from " hence that, that almoſt the whole of the leſs refrangible rays " paſs quite through the atmoſphere into celeſtial ſpace; where- " as many of the more refrangible ones are reflected back to the " eye; in the ſame manner as the infuſion of lignum niphriticum " appears blue by reflected, and orange by tranſmitted light." The ſea appears green by reflected light, becauſe not only many blue and violet, but alſo ſome of the leſs refrangible rays are reflected, ſufficient to compoſe a green. But by the air, few rays are reflected beſides violet, indigo, and blue; and therefore only an azure colour, the reſult of a mixture of theſe, is ſeen."*

" In ſupport of this opinion it may be obſerved, that the moon and planets, and all thoſe celeſtial bodies that ſhine by reflection, appea , by night, not of a white colour, (even though the ſky's blue light is mixed with their's) but of a yellowiſh or orange one. That is, ſuch a colour as is left after a proper quantity of blue and violet-making rays are taken out

 of

" * By refraction, this azure colour, when in its pureſt ſtate, appears to abound moſt in violet, and leſs in blue, green, and yellow in order; with ſcarce any orange or red.

of a white. And I ſuppoſe that our earth would appear of the ſame yellowiſh colour to an eye placed in the moon, or in one of the planets, for reaſons already given."

" But it is ſtill more worthy of obſervation, that much of the *red* light is retained in or not reflected by the moon, becauſe it will be found on examination, that the caſe is the ſame with our earth. For its ſurface being for the moſt part green, a mixed colour compoſed chiefly of yellow and blue, much of the red light is abſorbed by the vegetables, and by the ſea. This ſeems to ſhew, the moon's ſurface, like that of the earth, is covered with green vegetables, and that it has ſeas. And as herbage is deſigned chiefly for the uſe of animals, we are hereby furniſhed with another probable argument that the moon is inhabited. The like may be obſerved with reſpect to the other planets, and their ſatellites."

His laſt eſſay on the light of the celeſtial bodies is ſo highly curious and original, and tends ſo evidently to eſtabliſh a new ſyſtem in this branch of philoſophy, that we dare ſay the reader will not be diſpleaſed to ſee it inſerted here entire.

" What

" What firſt led me to the enquiry was the conſideration, that if the ſun and fixed ſtars are either in a ſtate of real ignition, like that of a denſe body heated white hot, or of actual burning, like iron or zink, or only like that of our common culinary fires, they muſt be totally barren, and uninhabitable. And to ſuppoſe this of that almoſt infinite number of immenſe bodies, (by far the largeſt of any that we know of in the univerſe) appeared to me to be contrary to the deſign purſued in our globe, where every thing ſeems ſubſervient to animation, and where every part is filled with life. And I judged that any probable theory that would admit their being luminous, yet of ſuch a temperature as would be friendly to the exiſtence of organized and animated bodies, could not but be acceptable to philoſophers.

CONJECTURE I.

That the Sun is not an uninflammable Body in a State of Ignition.

" FOR from the great fulgency and clearneſs of the ſun's light, it appears to proceed rather from a flame, or rarefied fluid vapour, than from a mere ignited denſe body. A heated, denſe, uninflammable body, though in fuſion, (even the coals of a fire in which combuſtion alſo obtains) emit light in ſo ſmall a quantity

quantity, and that in ſo confuſed a manner, that it is of very little uſe towards viſion. Where as the flame of a candle, tho' it contains a quantity of heat which may be conſidered as nothing in compariſon to that of a large fire that does not flame, yields light regularly and in much greater abundance."

"If it be urged that the ſun is meant to *heat* as well as to *ſhine*, it may be anſwered, that the ſun is at ſo great a diſtance from the planets that they could derive no advantage from its heat *merely as ſuch*, even though it ſhould be much greater than its preſent colour ſpeaks it to be. And if more light can be yielded by a moderate heat, and this light has equally the power of exciting heat in bodies, it would ſeem to be by much the more eligible plan."

CONJECTURE II.

That the Body of the Sun is not in a State of Combuſtion.

"THAT the ſun is not in ſuch a burning ſtate as was mentioned in the Introduction, ſeems probable from its light having continued many thouſand years; long before the expiration of which we may reaſonably ſuppoſe that either the whole

of

of its inflammable matter would have been decompoſed, or its atmoſphere phlogiſticated, ſo as to be no longer capable of maintaining that proceſs. For in ſo rapid and *univerſal* a combuſtion as this muſt be ſuppoſed to be, it does not appear likely either that the latter could be purified, or the former renewed, ſo as to keep pace with their conſumption; eſpecially as vegetables (the great means by which *our* atmoſphere is purified) cannot exiſt in ſuch a heat as this combuſtion muſt produce.

" If we ſuppoſe the combuſtion to be ſlow and gentle, as in phoſphorus, this does not correſpond with the intenſe luſtre and vividneſs of the ſun's light; and another objection to this will alſo be found in the next article.

" To theſe may be added the arguments uſed in the Introduction to this paper, and at the end of the preceding Conjecture."

CONJECTURE III.

That the Body of the Sun is not at all in a luminous State.

" THIS conjecture is founded on the ſuppoſition of the ſun's being inhabited, and that its inhabitants enjoy the ſenſe of ſeeing.

" For if the matter of the ſun's body be in a ſhining ſtate, whether from ignition, combuſtion, or any other cauſe, diſtinct viſion cannot take place. For it will be obvious to thoſe who are acquainted with this ſubject that, for common and *uſeful* purpoſes of ſight, only the rays that are *reflected* or *tranſmitted* by *bodies not luminous* are proper. And that this reflection or tranſmiſſion cannot properly take place in bodies that ſhine with a light of their own. Alſo the eye itſelf muſt then be in a like luminous ſtate.

" I will now proceed to ſuggeſt how the ſun *may poſſibly* afford us the light he does, and yet be inhabitable. And I will propoſe it in the humble form of a *quære* or *problem*, leaving it to be more ſtrictly examined by others—if others ſhall think it worthy of examination."

PROBLEM.

Whether the Light of the Sun does not proceed from a luminous Meteor in his Atmoſphere, ſurrounding his whole Body at a Diſtance; and which therefore illuminates both the Sun itſelf, and the Planets and other Objects without?

" THIS may be effected in two different ways, as is ſeen (tho' in a leſſer degree, and at times only) in our own atmoſphere.

If

If in the region of ſhining meteors in the ſun's atmoſphere, an inflammation of vapour takes place, this flame may be kept up continually by inflammable vapours riſing in ſufficient quantity from the ſun's body.

" Whether water, or fixed air, be produced by this combuſtion, they will, by their ſuperior gravity, deſcend to the ſun; and they may there be again reſolved (by vegetation, or otherwiſe) into phlogiſton, and dephlogiſticated air. The latter will mix with the common atmoſphere; the former re-entering the compoſition of inflammable vapours, theſe will aſcend by their levity, and continue their inflammation.

" The conſumption of theſe ingredients may not, *in this caſe*, be ſo rapid but that they may be amply ſupplied by their reproduction.

" Though the light may be very fulgent, yet the *heat* of this rare flame will be much leſs than if the denſe body of the ſun was either in a white heat, or in a burning ſtate like iron, &c. and, being at a diſtance, it may not be inconvenient to animals

animals or vegetables on the ſun's ſurface. If we ſuppoſe only the *rare* ſubſtance, Prop. II. concerned, that perhaps will yield a white light even in ſuch a temperature as that of our atmoſphere: and, in the denſe air of the ſun, the light may be ſufficiently vivid.

" II. The electrical fluid in an exhauſted glaſs globe ſhines, yet does not feel hot. The caſe is the ſame with the light that ſometimes appears at the ends of bodies, and in ſome other electrical experiments; and it may poſſibly be ſo with the *aurora borealis*, at leaſt its heat does not ſeem to be conſiderable.

" As this latter phenomenon is ſometimes very luminous, and extends itſelf over ſo great a portion of the ſky, (notwithſtanding that it is at ſo great a height) whether the ſhining meteor ſuppoſed round the ſun may not be an *aurora*, which differs from ours only in that it is univerſal, continual, and much denſer, and therefore by far more bright and glorious?

" The rare, gentle, and partial appearance of it with us, and the conſtant, bright, and univerſal exiſtence of it ſuppoſed in the ſun, will differ only in *degree*. And this difference may ariſe from

from cauſes that we are at preſent unacquainted with: for, as yet, we know very little of the theory even of *our own aurora*. As the ſun is the heavieſt body of the ſyſtem, and the center of gravity, it may alſo be of the luminous matter; and hence it may abound much more in it than it does in the planets. The greater denſity of the ſun's atmoſphere may likewiſe have ſome influence in this buſineſs.

" Alſo the light of our aurora uſually abounds more in yellow than in any other colour. And as this is the caſe with the ſun's light, it ſeems to be an argument in favour of their identity. The caſe however is generally the ſame with our other luminous meteors.

" Suppoſing that the ſun ſhines by means of a luminous meteor, as has been ſuggeſted, whether by the firſt, or ſecond of theſe ways, it will lead us to the following conſiderations:

" 1. The meteor, and by conſequence the ſource from whence the ſun's light iſſues, will be at ſome diſtance above the ſun's

ſurface; and will ſurround that great body in the manner of a concave ſphere.

" 2. The ſun therefore will be ſomewhat denſer than he is at preſent concluded to be; for the bulk that we ſee will comprehend alſo part of his atmoſphere.

" 3. The ſpots ſometimes obſervable in the ſun, will be temporary holes, or diſcontinuities in the luminous meteor. And from theſe it will follow that much leſs light reaches the ſun's ſurface than may at firſt be imagined. So that viſion may be as convenient there as it is with us.

" 4. The colour of the ſun's ſky, when free from clouds, will probably be a reddiſh white, for the ſame reaſon that the ſun appears red at a diſtance beneath the ſurface of the ſea. For many of the more refrangible rays will be reflected back by the ſun's denſe atmoſphere in the paſſage of the light downwards. Alſo the ſpots in the ſun, if they are ſuch interſtices as ſuppoſed above, ſeem to ſhew that *much of the light in general* (whether

ther by the interpoſition of clouds, or otherwiſe,) is hindered from reaching the ſun's ſurface.

" 5. The other celeſtial bodies will not be viſible from the ſun's ſurface, though they are from our earth, and probably from the other planets alſo.

" 6. The temperature of the ſun may be ſo moderate as to be favourable to the exiſtence and propagation of organized and animated bodies, and minerals, as with us; only that theſe muſt be ſuppoſed to be adapted to the ſun's denſity, &c.

" 7. In the ſun, as in our earth, there may be ſeas, and dry land; woods, and open plains; hill, and dale; rain, and fair weather. And as the light, ſo the ſeaſon, will be perpetual; or diverſified only by diſtance, and occaſional interſtices in the luminous meteor. A fruitful fancy might repreſent it as a very deſirable habitation.

" 8. If the light of the ſun proceeds from ſuch a cauſe as has been conjectured, the ſame reaſoning muſt apply to the fixed ſtars. As ſome of thoſe are brighter than others, may it not

partly

partly ariſe from their ſhining meteors being brighter or denſer? at leaſt in ſome caſes. A queſtion ſomewhat ſimilar might be put with reſpect to the colour of their light; for the heat in ſome of them may be greater than in others: and the colour will be affected by the heat in this caſe, as in that ſuppoſed in Prop. III. and the ſame rule will, upon the whole, obtain, if theſe bodies and the ſun are ſuppoſed to become colder. In ſome of the fixed ſtars the light is found to vary. The meteor in theſe may be variable or partial, as with us. Theſe phenomena however may ariſe merely from the motion of theſe bodies, as Aſtronomers have ſuppoſed.

"Many other ideas relating to this ſubject might be ſtarted; but perhaps too much has been ſaid already. I ſhall content myſelf therefore with having ſhewn, by analogy of what ſometimes happens in our own atmoſphere, that the ſun and fixed ſtars *may poſſibly* be as cold as our earth; and as fruitful; and as plentifully inhabited, by beings of ſome kind; and therefore that thoſe numerous and immenſe bodies may be more uſeful in the creation, and redound more to the honour of their great Creator, than is at preſent ſuppoſed."

APO-

A P O L O G Y

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

WITH whatever indifference and even deteſtation I ma at this moment regard life, yet I cannot ſee with unconcern, the malicious attempts of my enemies to aſſaſſinate my character; a character which it has ever been the pride of my ſoul to preſerve unſullied, and which till now the tooth of Calumny has not dared to invade.

The peace of ſociety, it is true, may demand my life as a ſacrifice to her injured laws. But the ſword of juſtice, which deprives me of exiſtence, ſhall not tarniſh my reputation. The eye of Mercy ſhall weep over the misfortunes of a man, who

was rather wretched than criminal; and the liberal and candid ſoul ſhall ſwell with indignation at the baſe and cruel conduct of the woman that abridged his exiſtence.

The friends of this perfidious woman have been at infinite pains to poiſon the public channels of information with reſpect to me; and have laboured moſt induſtriouſly, to propagate to my prejudice a thouſand groundleſs reports.

Diſappointed avarice, they ſay, was the cauſe of my attempt to aſſaſſinate Miſs Boydell. But what perſon, that has the ſmalleſt knowledge of the human heart, and who gives himſelf a moment's time to reflect, can ever be impoſed upon by an opinion ſo improbable, ſo abſurd. Or when was it that avarice, a cool, an intereſted and calculating paſſion, ever prompted a man to the deſperate action of which I have been guilty; an action of which the ſole gain was certain ruin and inevitable deſtruction? Yes, indeed, avarice was the primary cauſe of this deſperate attempt. But it was her avarice: it was the avarice of a woman who ſacrificed an affection of upwards of twenty years growth to the new flames of a more opulent pretender: it was the

treacherous

treacherous avarice of a cruel woman, who has broken, from the baſe motives of intereſt alone, the moſt ſolemn vows, the moſt tender aſſurances of mutual love; and who has abandoned to the moſt excruciating deſpair, the bleeding heart of a man whom ſhe had taught to adore her; of a man who had long known no joys but what were mingled with her image, no pains but what bore the impreſs of her diſpleaſure. Well doſt thou know, *Joſiah*,* the truth of what I aſſert, and often, ſince the baſe deſertion of her plighted troth, have you reprobated with generous indignation the conduct of a ſiſter who reſembles you ſo little.

It has alſo been inſinuated, and even impudently aſſerted, that my acquaintance with Miſs Boydell is ſlight and of recent date. Thoſe who are acquainted with the parties concerned, know the falſity of this aſſertion. The following particulars will convince of its untruth thoſe even who are ſtrangers to us both.

Nature has by no means been prodigal of exterior charms to Miſs Boydell. Her face, far from poſſeſſing any of thoſe beauties

* Mr. Boydell, junior.

ties that faſcinate at firſt ſight, ſeems rather unfavourable to love: her perſon even in the eyes of an admirer cannot eaſily be reconciled to the rules of elegant proportion.

Faſcinated as I was by the charms of this faithleſs woman, I had long ceaſed to be ſenſible to theſe defects, or rather, my impaſſioned imagination had converted them into perfections. But thoſe who did not labour under the power of this magic, were ſtruck by her ungraceful exterior, and mine ears have not unfrequently been ſhocked to hear the tongue of indifference pronounce, that the object of my paſſion was *ugly and deformed.* Add to this, that Miſs Boydell has long ſince ceaſed to boaſt the bloom of youth, and then let any perſon impartial and unprejudiced decide, whether a paſſion for her, ſo violent as that which I have manifeſted, could be the produce of a ſlight and recent acquaintance; or whether it muſt not rather be the conſequence of long habit and inveterate intimacy.

In fact, my acquaintance with Miſs Boydell began very ſoon in life. It commenced at an early period of my apprenticeſhip. I admired her good ſenſe and ſolid underſtanding; I was captivated

vated by her engaging converſation and elegant accompliſhments. A ſimilarity of ſentiments and purſuits cemented our attachment We both deſpiſed the gay frivolity of the age, both were devoted to the purſuit of ſcience, both were addicted to the ſtudy of the belles lettres, and paſſionately fond of the fine arts. Some caſual coincidencies alſo contributed to impreſs my mind with an idea that nature meant us for each other. We were both born in the ſame year, and on the ſame day, at the ſame hour. Trifling indeed theſe circumſtances may appear to the eyes of an indifferent perſon; but nothing is little or inſignificant in friendſhip or in love. The habit of ſeeing her often was ſoon converted into a neceſſity of ſeeing her. Her mental charms diffuſed an impoſing luſtre on her leſs amiable exterior; and at length I found that an inclination, which bore hitherto the ſemblance of friendſhip, began inſenſibly to aſſume the appearance of a paſſion which controuls with unbounded ſway the human heart.

I dared at length to whiſper to the object of my deſires the timid confeſſion of a flame which gathered every day greater and greater force. She heard with propitious ears the tender de-

 claration,

claration, and even flattered my paſſion with the modeſt avowal of correſponding emotions.

Matters continued in this ſtate for ſeveral years. I preſſed her repeatedly to make me happy, in the poſſeſſion of her hand. But on account of her dependance on an uncle, and the mediocrity of my fortune, ſhe ſtill perſiſted in refuſing my requeſt; and continued to defer to ſome more fortunate future day, the conſummation of our felicity. I regarded as an emanation of prudence, that which, as the event has ſince proved, proceeded merely from cool, calculating ſelf-intereſt and venal baſeneſs.

I determined to ſmother, if poſſible, an hopeleſs flame. I ceaſed to viſit Miſs Boydell, and endeavoured, alas! in vain, to baniſh her image from my mind. I had not ſeen her for a conſiderable while, when, one evening peruſing the newſpapers, I read the marriage of a Miſs Boydell of Cheapſide to a perſon whoſe name I have forgot. Thunderſtruck with the intelligence, and not doubting but that it was the very Miſs Boydell who was the object of my affection, I fell ſenſeleſs on the floor.

And

And now I felt how firmly ſhe was rivetted in my heart; and ſaw with horror, that without her I could not, *dared* not to exiſt. Would to God the deed of deſpair* had been accompliſhed! Then ſhould I have fled from a world of woe. Then ſhould I have eſcaped the horrors and ignominy which now ſurround me!--- As ſoon as, in my own deſpite, the native vigour of my conſtitution had overcome the effects of this deſperate attempt—thou knoweſt, Maria,† what I mean—I abandoned, without further enquiry, my buſineſs, and quitted London, hoping by abſence and a change of objects to mitigate my pain. For the ſpace of twelve years I wandered over the kingdom, like a being of another ſphere, who took no concern, and had no intereſt in the paſſions, or purſuits of the human ſpecies. And indeed my converſation was rather with the beaſts of the field and the birds of the air, than with the ſons of man: I was oftener ſeen in the ſolitary haunts of the nightingale, than amidſt the habitations of the human race. The tongue of hard-hearted deriſion was lolled out as I paſſed diſconſolate and forlorn.

* He attempted to deſtroy himſelf by poiſon, but the ſtrength of his conſtitution proved ſuperior to the doſe.

† Miſs Mary Boydell.

lorn. The man of feeling turned aſide his head, while the gracious drops of ſympathy trickled down his cheeks. At length the moſt excruciating anguiſh, the moſt heart-rending tempeſts were ſucceeded by an abſolute apathy of ſoul. My faculties were worn out, my heart was mortified, my feelings were frozen up and benumbed.

In this ſtate of mind I returned to London. And in this ſtate of inſenſibility, joyleſs as it was, would to God I had forever remained! But alas! Fate had reſerved me for torments greater than thoſe which I had already endured; or rather, the perſevering cruelty of a perfidious woman had determined to perſecute to the laſt, a man, whoſe greateſt crime was that of loving her too well.

One day, entering my ſhop (for I had commenced again the buſineſs of Apothecary) I found two ladies ſitting there, one of whom I thought I could recognize. As ſoon as ſhe obſerved me, ſhe cried out, "Mr. Elliot! Mr. Elliot!" and fell back in a ſwoon. The well-known voice ſtruck me like a ſhock of electricity; my affections inſtantly guſhed forth; I fell ſenſeleſs at her

her feet. When I came to myſelf, I found Miſs Boydell ſitting by my ſide. She had recovered firſt from her affected ſwoon, for its reality I have too much reaſon to doubt.

Why, cruel woman! didſt thou renew the unhappy attachment? Why didſt thou wantonly wake from its cinders, a flame which time and abſence had extinguiſhed in my heart? But for thee my days might yet have glided on in untroubled indifference! But for thee perhaps an happier flame had melted the unnatural frigidity of my heart! But for thee I might have been bleſt in the poſſeſſion of a woman worthier of my affections! But for thee perhaps I might at this moment have been the happieſt of mortals, who am now the moſt miſerable among men!

My paſſion burſt forth at once from its aſhes, with as much vehemence as if it had never been extinguiſhed. She met, or feigned at leaſt to meet my renovated flame with correſponding warmth. We exchanged a thouſand tender proteſtations of unalterable love. We met often at the houſe of a young lady, the confidant of us both; and the hours of unavoidable abſence were employed in

writing the warmeſt epiſtles which the tendereſt paſſion could inſpire.

Totally occupied by the intereſts of my love, I gave up my buſineſs, to which I could no longer pay attention. I abandoned my literary purſuits. My ſole buſineſs, my only amuſement was, to meditate on her charms. I imbibed from every hour as it paſſed a freſh potion of love and infatuated fondneſs. The ſubtle poiſon glided in my veins with greater and greater virulence. Simple as it was, and unſuſpicious of guile, my ſoul, rolled up and collected in one point, brooded inceſſantly on her ſole idea. Her image was infixed in my heart, was inwove with my exiſtence. She was mingled with my ſoul, ſhe was writhed round and round my bowels like a ſerpent, to excruciate in her cruel convolutions mine agonizing entrails. Monſter, that thou art! is this the reward of all my tenderneſs? Is this the return for the moſt unbounded affection? But huſh, my troubled ſoul! Be compoſed awhile, ye ſtorms that rage within my breaſt! Give not mine enemies occaſion to fix upon me the imputation of madneſs!

—But

—But no---I confeſs the charge, I feel at this moment the cruel malady working in my blood; it mounts to my brain.—Fiend of Hell, it is thy work! Perfidious woman, it is thy work!

Let me recover, if I can, the broken thread of my narration. I perceived ſome time ago a remarkable alteration in her conduct. She began to treat me with coolneſs and reſerve, and ſtudiouſly avoided every opportunity of ſpeaking with me in private. I was ſtruck with horror and aſtoniſhment at the change. I endeavoured to find out the cauſe, and was not long in diſcovering that a richer rival had ſupplanted me in her heart; that the glittering traſh of an intereſted pretender had committed to oblivion the treaſured affection of twenty years accumulation; that a ſtranger, whoſe avaricious views regarded her perſon merely as an appendix, and perhaps as an unpleaſing appendix to other conveniencies, was preferred to a man who had ſpent, as it were, at her feet a large portion of his life; to a lover who had no wiſhes beyond herſelf, and to whom ſhe had a thouſand times confeſſed a mutual flame, and promiſed, moſt ſolemnly promiſed the moſt inviolable fidelity.

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I endeavoured to procure an opportunity of pouring forth at her feet the anguiſh of my ſoul, in hopes that the ſight of mine agonies, of my deſpair, might excite a ſentiment of pity in her breaſt; might renew perhaps that affection, of which I flattered myſelf I had formerly been the object. Fool that I was! Never had her ſelfiſh heart been ſuſceptible of the generous ſentiments which ſhe pretended to entertain; never had her hypocritical ſoul conſidered me but merely as the victim of her vanity, as an object of intereſted ſpeculation.

She refuſed to admit my viſits. Filled with the dolorous and deſpairing complaints of a bleeding heart, my letters were at firſt deſpiſed, and ſoon after ſent back unopened. Furious and deſperate, I ruſhed abroad. I hurried with frantic ſteps to Hampſtead. Hampſtead, the ſcene of my former happineſs! Hampſtead, where this perfidious woman had often practiſed her deceitful arts on a heart, alas! too credulous and ſimple! I ſought the copſe, whoſe conſcious ſhade had often veiled our mutual endearments; had often been invoked to witneſs our mutual vows of fidelity and love. Good God! how was the ſcene changed! How

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ſad and diſmal did that ſpot ſeem, which was wont to ſmile with a thouſand charms on my inchanted imagination! The ſeat of the graces was now uſurped by fiends of darkneſs. The Furies ſat horrible in the midſt! They diffuſed a funereal gloom; they breathed their peſtilential influence through the grove!—— I feel the infernal contagion! My blood is inflamed! My blaſted ſoul is burnt up!—Burſt forth, ye flames of Hell that rage within my boſom! Conſume this receptacle of villainy, devour to the very roots a grove whoſe guilty ſhade gave ſhelter to a monſter of deceit! Let it be deſolate for ever! Let the fowls of heaven avoid the peſtilential ſpot! Let the traveller hurry by with execration and horror! Henceforward, let no creature harbour in its ruins but birds obſcene and imps of Hell, aſſaſſination and treachery, with cruelty, perfidy and hardneſs of heart. I ruſhed frantic from the accurſed place. A precipice offered itſelf to my view. I ran to extinguiſh in night eternal a miſerable exiſtence. A ſudden thought withheld me on the brink. Shall ſhe triumph in my fall, the perfidious cauſe or my calamity? Shall ſhe mock unpuniſhed, with her new paramour, at the credulous ſimplicity of my heart? Shall ſhe ſee my paſſing bier with

ſatisfaction? With ſelf congratulating thoughts ſhall ſhe behold depoſited in the duſt the reproach of her perfidy, the wretched victim of her violated vows? No, rather———I returned home, planning in my mind, and ruminating on a ſcheme of vengeance and deſpair. I took down my piſtols, ſovereign reſource of the wretched! I ſaid, be propitious to my juſt revenge! I tied them two and two together. I loaded them carefully. I looked with grim ſatisfaction at my horrid arrangement. I put in each pocket a brace. Be this, ſaid I, the reward of perfidy; and this, my deliverer from torments greater than humanity can bear. At leaſt we ſhall be united in death; at leaſt we ſhall ſink together to the ſhades!

Barbarian! I exclaimed a moment after, repenting of my purpoſe—Barbarian! wouldſt thou then embrue thy hands in the blood of thy miſtreſs? Wouldſt thou ſtain thine aſſaſſinating arm with the blood of a woman ſo dear to thy heart? Art thou weary of exiſtence? Thy life is in thine own hands, but what authority haſt thou over the days of another? Leave her

her to her own reflections, leave her to the purſuit of an avenging conſcience, which ſooner or later muſt overtake her.

I immediately extracted the balls from one brace of piſtols, and I formed a new reſolution. With the brace which was charged with powder only, I reſolved to wake her, as it were, to a ſenſe of her cruel and perfidious conduct; while with the other I determined to blow out my brains, and fall breathleſs at her feet.

I ſallied forth in order to put in practice my fatal reſolution. For the ſpace of a whole month I watched in vain every day, and all day long, for a proper opportunity. Meanwhile I forced upon my reluctant ſtomach a little food, in order to give me ſtrength to execute my purpoſe. I repaired every morning to my poſt, and every evening I crawled diſappointed back again to my comfortleſs couch on the field, exhauſted with fatigue, and torn with rage and love and madneſs and deſpair. O! for a pen of fire to deſcribe the conflict of my ſoul, the agonies I endured! O! for a pencil fraught with the deepeſt and moſt infernal

fernal ſhades of deſpair, to paint in colours adequately diſmal the horrors that ſurrounded me!

At length I overtook her walking arm in arm with her new lover. Maddening at the ſight, I preſſed precipitately after her. I fired at her back the piſtols charged with powder. But I was ſeized before I could compleat my plan, by applying the other brace to my head. The public are already acquainted with the reſt.

And now come, perfidious woman! come and glut thyſelf with vengeance! Come, and behold mingled and confounded with aſſaſſins and malefactors, a man who was wont to ſtartle at the very ſhadow of a crime! See thoſe arms which oft incircled thee in their tender embrace, now laden with vilifying chains! Sunken in their ſockets, and almoſt extinct, behold thoſe eyes which uſed to brighten up at thy ſight! Wan, emaciated, diſfigured, behold the man who had no pleaſure but in thy preſence, and to whom, deprived of thee, exiſtence was miſery itſelf!

Soon too ſhall an ignominious death——But no, a broken heart ſhall ſave me from diſgrace---I feel the approach of death ---I long ardently for his arrival.

To me the king of terrors ſhall appear arrayed in ſmiles. He will deliver me from an odious exiſtence. He will remove me to a place of reſt, where perfidy and deceit ſhall approach me no more.---Thou wilt open, O earth! beneficent mother, thy compaſſionating boſom to receive an unhappy ſon! Thou wilt cover him from the darts of calumny, from the poiſoned arrows of malice, from the ſneer of the unfeeling! Soundly ſhall he ſleep upon thy lap, and the wicked ſhall trouble no longer his repoſe!

——He ſhall ſleep ſoundly—but Mary, ſhalt thou ſleep? Shall the couch of the guilty be pleaſant as the ſlumbers of the babe that repoſeth on the boſom of his mother? Shall mine image never mingle with the ſhadows of the night? Shall the quivering curtain drawn at midnight never diſcover the pale and ghaſtly form of an injured lover? Ah! believe it not, Mary—believe it not—Yet a little while, and divine juſtice ſhall overtake

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the perjured head. Conſcience prepareth her inſtruments of torture; ſhe whetteth her arrows, ſhe giveth to her lancets a keener edge; ſhe will ſeize upon her victim, ſhe will ſtretch it agonizing on the rack! Heaven and earth ſhall riſe up in judgment againſt thy cruel perfidy. Hell ſhall multiply her horrors round about thee, till life ſhall be loathſome to thy ſoul; till thou ſhalt long for the approach of death, as the benighted traveller longeth for the return of the morning!

BRITISH MUSEUM

FINIS.